

Emerging fishery for stargazers

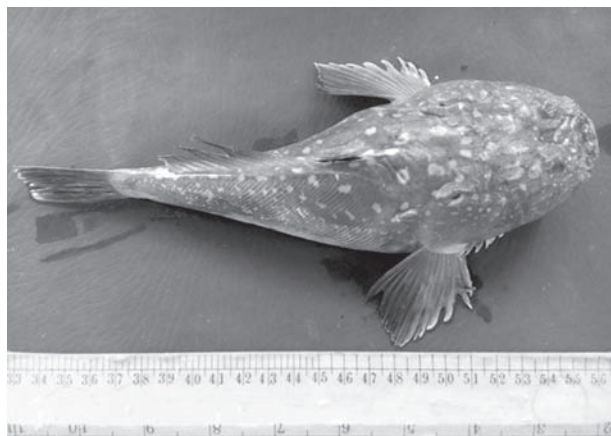
S. Surya, R. Saravanan, A. K Abdul Nazar, N. Bhoominathan, R. Selvakumar, K. Shanmughanathan and K. Thangavel

Mandapam Regional Centre of ICAR- Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Mandapam

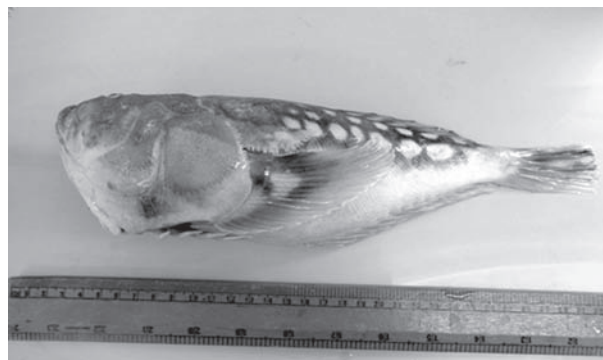
Fishes commonly known as stargazers, of the family Uranoscopidae, is emerging as a lucrative fishery along the Pamban coast of Tamil Nadu. The fish is generally characterized by large head, dorso laterally directed eyes placed on the large flattened head, dark brownish body and head with or without irregular whitish blotches on the back. The fishes were landed at Pamban Light House landing centre by fibre boats having an overall length (OAL) of 8 m, fitted with a 60 hp engine with a speed capacity



Ichthyoscopus lebeck



Uranoscopus marmoratus



Ichthyoscopus sp.



Uranoscopus sulphureus

of about 20 knots. The No.4 gillnet, characterised by 105 mm mesh size, having about 1000 m length is utilized for the particular fishery. The fishery started from October 2015 and initially the traders were not ready to auction the catch. However, after knowing the demand for these fishes which are served in hotels in the neighbouring districts, they started marketing it after proper skinning. Three species of stargazers were identified from the catch that includes *Ichthyoscopus lebeck*, *Uranoscopus marmoratus* and *Uranoscopus sulphureus*. The fishes were sold as individual pieces which cost ₹ 40 - 240 depending upon the weight of the fishes which varied from 250 g to 1.5 kg each.